

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EFIN, TU
SUBJECT: TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN ROUNDUP, MAY 19-25

REF: ANKARA 3878 (DTG 181330Z MAY 77)

1. THE TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN CONTINUED IN FULL SWING DURING THE PAST WEEK, WITH MOST LEADERS CAMPAIGNING NEARLY FULL-TIME. BEGINNING MAY 24, RADIO PROPAGANDA ON STATE-OWNED RADIO NETWORK WAS ADDED TO RALLIES AND PRINTED PROPAGANDA. (NO TELEVISION APPEALS WILL BE PERMITTED THIS YEAR DUE TO LACK
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OF ENABLING LEGISLATION.) AFTER MORE THAN TWO WEEKS AT ONLY A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL, THE INTENSITY OF INCIDENTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE ROSE SLIGHTLY. SOME OF THESE INCIDENTS WERE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE CAMPAIGN. PRESS ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE LEFT OF CENTER REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) AND THREE PARTIES OF THE GOVERNING NATIONALIST FRONT: THE CENTER-RIGHT JUSTICE PARTY (JP), THE RELIGIOUS-

FUNDAMENTALIST NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP), AND THE EXTREME RIGHT NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP). THE THREE LARGEST PARTIES EACH CONTINUED TO CLAIM THAT THEY WILL WIN AN OUTRIGHT MAJORITY OF THE 450 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SEATS, WHILE THE PREVIOUSLY UNIMPORTANT, BUT NOW RISING NAP, MORE MODESTLY (BUT EQUALLY UNREALISTICALLY) CLAIMED THAT IT WOULD WIN 60 SEATS. EVENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN COULD STILL TIP THE BALANCE, BUT AT THIS POINT, THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT ANY PARTY WILL WIN A MAJORITY.

2. INTENSIVE SECURITY MEASURES, IN FORCE AS A RESULT OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE AT SOME RPP RALLIES IN APRIL AND AT THE MAY DAY LABOR RALLY IN ISTANBUL, HAVE BEEN LARGELY SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING DOWN CAMPAIGN-RELATED VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, DURING THE WEEK SOME VIOLENT EVENTS MARRED THE CAMPAIGN. DURING A SWING THROUGH EASTERN TURKEY BY RPP LEADER ECEVIT, THREE INCIDENTS OCCURRED -- A BOMB EXPLODED 250 YARDS FROM WHERE HE WAS SPEAKING IN MALATYA MAY 21, FIGHTING (INVOLVING MOSTLY FISTS, ROCKS, AND CLUBS, BUT ALSO PISTOLS) BROKE OUT BETWEEN EXTREME LEFTISTS AND RPP YOUTH DURING HIS APPEARANCE IN KARS MAY 22, AND HIS CONVOY WAS STONED BY RIGHTIST YOUTH IN ERZURUM LATER THE SAME DAY. ON MAY 24, PRIMIN DEMIREL WAS THE TARGET OF VIOLENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING HIS CAMPAIGN. A GROUP OF YOUTHS ATTEMPTED TO DISRUPT A RALLY IN A SMALL TOWN IN USAK PROVINCE (WESTERN ANATOLIA) BY THROWING STONES. POLICE QUICKLY RESTORED ORDER. IN ALL THESE INCIDENTS, ONLY MINOR INJURIES OCCURRED; HOWEVER, ONE JP YOUTH AND ONE RPP YOUTH WERE KILLED WHILE PUTTING UP ELECTION POSTERS IN UNRELATED INCIDENTS MAY 18 AND 19. BOTH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RPP LEADER ECEVIT AND JP LEADER MADE IT CLEAR IN THEIR FIRST RADIO ADDRESSES MAY 24 THAT POLITICAL VIOLENCE ("ANARCHIC INCIDENTS") WOULD BE ONE OF THE MAJOR ISSUES OF THE CAMPAIGN, EACH BLAMING THE OTHER'S PARTY. LESSER PARTIES OF LEFT AND RIGHT HAVE ALSO MADE THE VIOLENCE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE.

3. JUSTICE PARTY CAMPAIGN. PRIMIN DEMIREL BEGAN HIS CAMPAIGN WEEKS AFTER THE OTHER CANDIDATES BUT HAS BEEN TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME BY MAINTAINING THE HEAVIEST SCHEDULE OF ANY OF THE CANDIDATES. MOST MAJOR PAPERS TEND TO SIDE WITH THE OPPOSITION RPP AND HAVE THEREFORE CHARACTERIZED HIS CROWDS AS UNENTHUSIASTIC AND DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL, EVEN WHEN RUNNING PICURES SHOWING WHAT APPEAR TO BE VAST MULTITUDES. CONGEN IZMIR REPORTS THAT HIS RALLY THERE MAY 22 OUTDID ANY PREVIOUS ELECTION'S TURNOUT FOR EITHER THE JP OR ITS PREDECESSOR, THE DEMOCRAT PARTY, AND THAT IT WAS AT LEAST AS LARGE AS ECEVIT'S MAY 7 RALLY (AND THE CROWD APPARENTLY MORE ENTHUSIASTIC). OBSERVERS IN IZMIR CREDITED EXTREMELY GOOD ORGANIZATION AND A MUCH MORE

VIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE BY DEMIREL THAN IN 1973. DEMIREL ALSO CAMPAIGNED IN OTHER PROVINCES IN WESTERN ANATOLIA, IN OUTSKIRTS OF ISTANBUL, IN TURKISH THRACE, AND IN BLACK SEA PROVINCES WITH APPARENTLY ONLY ISTANBUL PROVIDING A POOR TURNOUT. HIS MAIN THEMES HAVE BEEN (A) ATTACKS ON THE RPP AS THE PARTY OF ANARCHY AND ALIEN LEFTISM, (B) ATTACKS ON HIS COALITION PARTNER, THE NSP, AS "THE CRUTCH OF THE RPP" WHICH WILL ENABLE THE RPP TO RETURN TO POWER ("EVERY VOTE GIVEN TO THE NSP IS A VOTE FOR LEFTISM") AND AS AN AMORPHOUS PARTY WHICH CANNOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, (C) APPEALS TO ALL "NATIONALISTS" TO RALLY TO THE JP TO PREVENT THE NECESSITY OF ANOTHER COALITION GOVERNMENT, (D) CLAIMS THAT THE JP IS THE ONLY PARTY CAPABLE (IF ONLY IT COULD RETURN TO POWER ALONE) OF PROVIDING PROSPERITY. DEMIREL HAS ALSO EMPHASIZED HIS IDENTIFICATION WITH ISLAM. AT MOST OF HIS RALLIES HE IS PRESENTED WITH A COPY OF THE KORAN WHICH HE PIOUSLY KISSES IN FRONT OF THE ASSEMBLED CROWDS (AND THE PRESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FORMER LUMINARIES OF THE JP-BREAKAWAY DEMOCRATIC PAARTY
(DP) HAVE BEEN PROMINENT AT THE MAIN JP RALLIES
IN WESTERN TURKEY.

4. NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY. THE ULTRANATIONALIST NAP,
WHICH WON ONLY ONE SEAT IN 1969 AND THREE IN 1973, IS CONCEDED
BY VIRTUALLY ALL OBSERVERS TO BE ON THE RISE; VARIOUS NON-
RIGHTIST PAPERS HAVE NTED WITH PROFESSED AMAZEMENT (SAID
TO BE SHARED BY THE NAP) THE SIZE OF TURKS'S CROWDS, SAID
TO BE MANY TIMES LARGER THAN 1973.
DEP PRIMIN TURKES, THE NAP " BASBUG" (AN
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ARCHAIC TURKISH WORD FOR "LEADER") IS APPARENTLY ATTEMPTING
TO BROADEN THE PARTY'S APPEAL BEYOND ITS MAIN BASE OF ETHNIC
TURKISH RIGHTISTS. IN A MAY 19 SPEECH IN ELAZIG (IN EASTERN
ANATOLIA), HE MADE AN APPEAL TO THE REGION'S MANY KURDS AND
SHIA MUSLIMS (WHO ARE GENERALLY FEARFUL OF THE IMPLICATIONS
OF NAP PAN-TURANISM) BY DECLARING THAT THE NAP VIEWS ALL
CITIZENS AS EQUAL, REGARDLESS OF REGION, RACE, OR RELIGION.
HE ALSO ATTEMPTED TO STEAL AN NSP THEME BY PROMISING TO END
THE IMBALANCE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS LEFT EASTERN
TURKEY IN PROVERTY. AGAIN ECHOING THE NSP, TURKES SAID
MAY 18 THAT THE NAP OPPOSES TURKISH RELATIONS WITH
THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (EEC), A CAPITALIST, CHRISTIAN
MONOLTH THREATENING TO SWALLOW MUSLIM TURKEY, AND THAT THE
NAP IS AS MUCH AGAINST ACAPITALISM AS AGAINST COMMUNISM.
A RECENT PARTY DIRECTIVE HAS BANNED THE USE OF THREE SLOGANS
HITHERTO POPULAR AMONG NAP YOUTH: " MURDERER ECEVIT",
" COMMUNISTS TO MOSCOW", AND " OUR AIM-TURAN, OUR GUIDE-
THE KORAN", EVIDENTLY IN ORDER TO MODERATE THE PARTY'S
IMAGE. THE RPP AND LEFTISM, ALONG WITH THE NSP ("CRUTCH
OF LEFTISM") ARE THE MAIN NAP TARGETS.

5. NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY CAMPAIGN. ALTHOUGH NSP
CHIEF, DEP PRIMIN ERBAKAN, CONTINUES TO RADIATE ENERGY AND
CONFIDENCE, INTERNAL PARTY DISSIDENCE AND CORRUPTION CHARGES
INVOLVING ERBAKAN'S BROTHER SEEM TO BE REFLECTED IN DIMINISHING
CROWDS. THE PAST WEEK'S CAMPAIGN TOOK ERBAKAN TO EASTERN
ANATOLIA AND THE ADANA REGION; HIS AUDIENCE IN ADANA PROBABLY
DID NOT EXCEED FIVE THOUSAND AT ITS HEIGHT ANDDDWINDLED
AFTER BEING KEPT WAITING AN HOUR AND A HALF WHILE ERBAKAN

SAID PRAYERS IN A MOSQUE. (ERBAKAN MAKES A POINT OF SAYING NOT ONLY ALL FIVE STANDARD DAILY PRAYERS, BUT ALSO PRAYING IN ALL NOTABLE SHRINES ALONG HIS CAMPAIGN ROUTE.) BESIDES EMPHASIZING HIS PARTY'S ATTACHMENT TO ISLAM (IN APPARENT DEFIANCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROHIBITIONS AGAINST THE USE OF RELIGION AS A POLITICAL TOOL), ERBAKAN HAS BEEN ATTACKING THE "LEFTIST" RPP AND THE "COLORLESS" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JP AND HAS BEEN EMPHASIZING THAT THE NSP IS THE PARTY WHICH THROUGH INDUSTRIALIZATION WILL RESTORE TURKEY TO ITS FORMER PLACE AS A WORLD LEADER. HE ALSO EMPHASIZES THE NSP'S NATIONALISM, AND HAS PLEDGED THAT, WHEN THE NSP COMES TO PWOER, IT WILL SOLVE THE GORDIAN KNOT OF CYPRUS WITH THE SWORD STROKE OF A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FOR THE TURKISH FEDERATED STATE OF CYPRUS.

6. REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY CAMPAIGN. ECEVIT STAYED IN ANKARA FOR HALF A WEEK, THEN RETURNED TO ACTIVE CAMPAIGNING IN EASTERN ANATOLIA, WHERE, AS IN HIS LAST FORAY THERE, HIS APPEARANCES BROUGHT FORTH SOME INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE (SEE PARA. 2). DAILY MILLIYET'S EDITOR, ABDI IPEKCI, WROTE MAY 24 THAT, UNLIKE DEMIREL, WHO STIRS NO EMOTIONS, ECEVIT BRINGS FORTH EITHER ADULATION OR HATRED, THUS GETTING BOTH THE CAMPAIGN'S MOST ENTHUSIASTIC CROWDS AND MOST OF THE CAMPAIGN VIOLENCE. NEVERTHELESS, ECEVIT FREQUENTLY APPEALS FOR VOTES ON THE BASIS THAT ONLY HE AND THE RPP CAN BRING AN END TO THE CUNTRY'S POLITICAL VIOLENCE. HE ATTACKS THE RULING COALITION HEADED BY THE JP FOR BEING BEHIND "THE MURDER OF TURKEY'S CHILDREN", FOR BRINGING THE COUNTRY CLOSE TO BANKRUPTCY, AND FOR CORRUPTION, NEOPTISM AND EXPLOITATION OF THE POOR. ALTHOUGH THE RPP IS NOTED FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO SECULARISM, AND ECEVIT MAY 24, DURING HIS CAMPAIGNING IN CENTRAL ANATOLIA, ACCUSED THE JP, NSP, AND NAP OF COMPETING TO EXPLOIT RELIGION, THE RPP HAS NOMINATED PROFESSIONAL RELIGIOUS MEN IN MUS, MALATYA, AND ISTANBUL. IN RELIGIOUSLY-CONSERVATIVE MALATYA, ECEVIT SHARED THE PODIUM MAY 21 WITH RPP SENATORIAL CANDIDATE LUTFU DOGAN, FORMER HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. MAY 18 PRESS REPORTED THE PRESENCE IN GERMANY OF A HIGH-LEVEL RPP DELEGATION ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE GERMAN LABOR FEDERATION AND THE RULING SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO HELP PRO-RPP TURKISH WORKERS RETURN TO TURKEY FOR THE ELECTIONS. (TURKISH LAW DOES NOT PERMIT ABSENTEE VOTING.)

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7. OTHER PARTIES. THE OTHER FOUR PARTIES GENERALLY RECEIVED ONLY SPORADIC AND SUPERFICIAL COVERAGE BY THE PRESS. FERRUH BOZBEYLI, LEADER OF THE MORIBUND DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DP), DREW HEADLINES MAY 24 AFTER OFFICIALLY DECLARING, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT HIS PARTY EXPECTED TO COME TO POWER VIA A COALITION PARTNERSHIP WITH THE RPP--ALTHOUGH HE SIMULTANEOUSLY DECLARED THAT, BETWEEN THE RIGHTIST DP AND THE LEFTIST RPP THERE COULD NEVER BE A SHARED VIEWPOINT. (PRO-RPP EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE GENERALLY STATED IN PRIVATE THAT, WHILE THE RPP PROBABLY COULD NOT WIN A MAJORITY ON ITS OWN, THE DP, IF IT CAN WIN TEN OR MORE SEATS, MIGHT BE SUFFICIENT AS A PARTNER TO ALLOW THE RPP TO COME TO POWER WITHOUT HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE DETESTED NSP.) A RECENT ARTICLE IN DAILY HURRIYET QUOTED AN ISTANBUL POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR AS SAYING THAT VOTES GOING TO THE NEWLY REFOUNDED TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TLP) WILL REDUCE THE RPP'S ELECTORAL CHANCES IN ISTANBUL BY FIVE SEATS, TWO OF WHICH WOULD GO TO THE TLP.

8. CONSULTATES GENERAL ISTANBUL AND IZMIR AND CONSULATE ADANA HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT.
MACOMBER

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Message Attributes

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